

For Immediate Release  
November 25, 2009

Contact: Valerie Rickert  
802-828-4242

## **Additional Unemployment Benefits Available**

Montpelier, Vt. – Commissioner Patricia Moulton Powden announced today that the Department of Labor has begun notifying individuals potentially eligible for additional Emergency Unemployment Compensation authorized under the Workers Assistance Act signed by President Obama earlier this month.

The Act added another potential week to the second tier of Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) Program, as well as adding a third tier for those states with a total unemployment rate of 6.5% or more. This means individuals who qualify will be eligible for up to 47 weeks of Emergency benefits. The week ending November 14, 2009 is the first week payable under the new Act.

“While Vermont’s unemployment rate has gone down slightly, there are still many Vermonters in need of the additional benefits” said Commissioner Powden. Last week over 5,000 individual accounts were adjusted to increase their EUC benefit amount. “We are hopeful the 2,500 or more Vermonters who had previously exhausted all unemployment entitlement will benefit from this unexpected additional extension.”

Currently there are three tiers of EUC benefits. Once one tier is exhausted, the unemployed worker will be found eligible for the next tier, provided the program is still in effect and the worker remains ineligible for Regular benefits and continues to look for work.

Tier 1 provides up to 20 weeks of EUC benefits.

Tier 2 provides up to 14 weeks of EUC benefits, netting a total of 34 weeks of EUC.

Tier 3 provides up to 13 weeks of EUC benefits for states that have a total unemployment rate of 6.5% or more. Approximately 3,000 unemployed workers will potentially qualify for this additional tier, resulting in a total of up to 47 weeks of EUC entitlement.

The Vermont Department of Labor has staffed up in anticipation of the traditional increase in workloads this time of year. However, anytime there is a change in the extension program, calls increase. “We are hopeful callers will remember some of the tips we provided last year for getting through when calls are heavy”, Commissioner Powden added. During these periods it is not unusual for callers to receive a message that all circuits are busy. Traditionally the busiest days of the week are Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. Tips for getting through are provided on Labor’s website at [www.Labor.Vermont.gov](http://www.Labor.Vermont.gov). A quick link for “Unemployed Workers” is provided under “News” on Labor’s home page.

## **Eligibility**

Emergency benefits will be available to individuals who have exhausted regular unemployment benefits. Qualifying individuals will continue to be eligible for the additional weeks provided they do not become eligible for regular benefits. However, absent additional action being taken by Congress, the EUC program is scheduled to end soon. To be found eligible for the Emergency benefits, the unemployed worker must establish entitlement to the applicable tier for a week that begins on or before December 31, 2009.

In addition to having exhausted state benefits, a worker must have worked 20 weeks in full-time covered employment or earned the equivalent in insured wages to qualify for extended benefits. Individuals found eligible for emergency benefits will be paid the same weekly benefit amount as previously paid under the state program. Emergency unemployment compensation will cease on May 31, 2010.

## **How to Apply**

Individuals who are currently receiving emergency unemployment need not do anything. The Unemployment Insurance Division will adjust their account.

Most individuals who have used all of their initial emergency benefits have been mailed a notice. Additional notices will be mailed this week. Each notice provides instructions on the action needed.

## **Financing**

The benefit and administrative costs of emergency benefits is 100% federally funded.